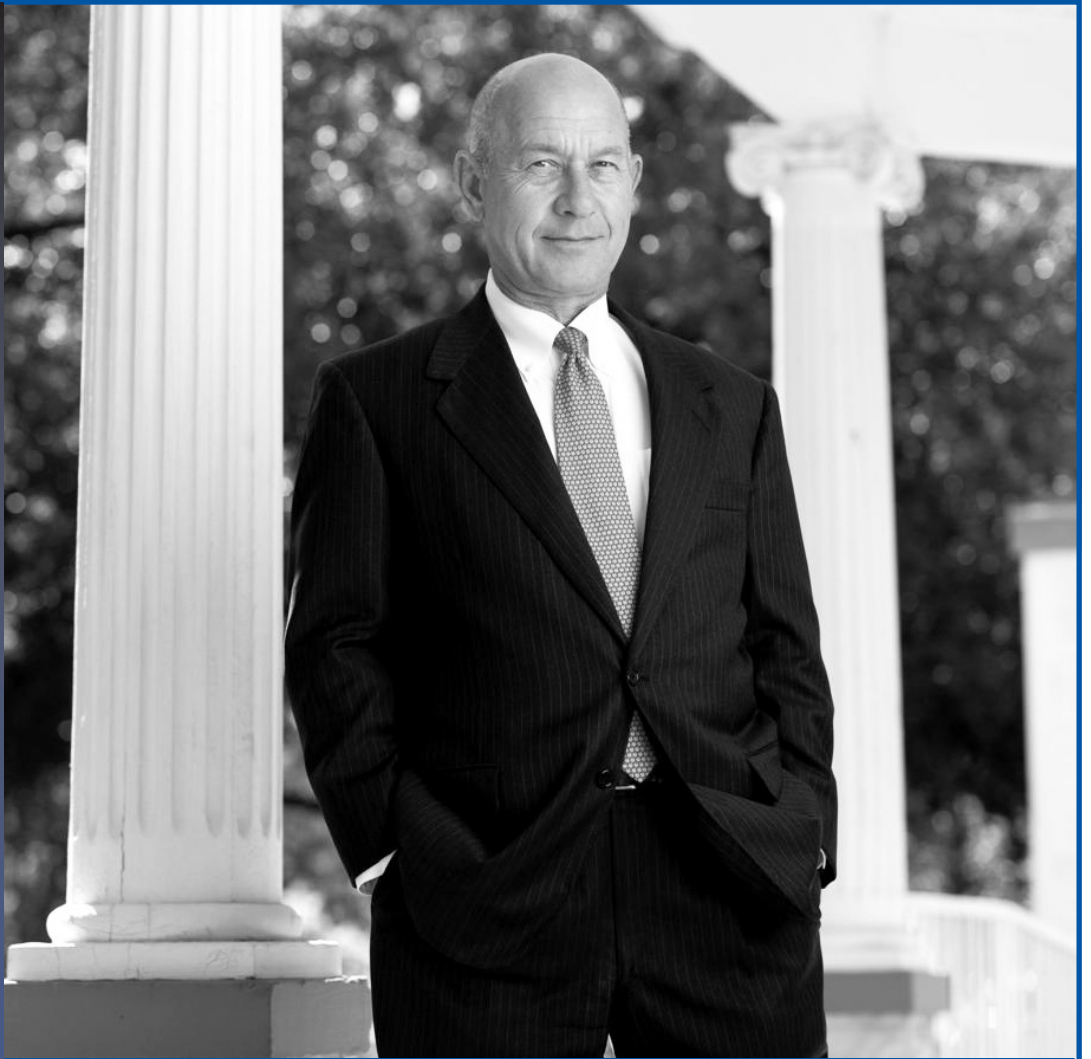


SENATOR JOHN WHITMIRE

Senate District 15 • Capitol Report



Dear Friends and Neighbors,

I am pleased to provide an update on some of the important issues facing the State of Texas and the residents of Senate District 15.

During the interim, House and Senate Committees are holding public hearings on a variety of topics to be considered by the 86th Legislature which convenes January 2019. As Chair of the Senate Criminal Justice Committee, I am continuing my efforts to bring needed reforms to our adult and juvenile justice systems with special attention on justice and fairness. In addition to the interim charges assigned to the Criminal Justice Committee, I plan to focus on overhauling our scandal plagued state juvenile justice facilities, comprehensive bail reform, mental health services, and chronic homelessness.

While most of the committee hearings will be held in Austin, a variety of interim charges specifically related to Hurricane Harvey response have been issued and hearings are being held in Houston and other areas of the state impacted by the devastating hurricane.

It has been months since Hurricane Harvey hit the gulf coast wreaking havoc over large parts of Texas, but officials are still determining the cost, clearing out debris, and waiting for funding for repairs, buyouts, and temporary housing. I am fully in favor of using the State's Economic Stabilization Fund to assist Texans impacted by Hurricane Harvey. If ever there was the need to tap our "Rainy Day" Fund, it is now. The State must do more to aid in the recovery efforts as well as invest in infrastructure including building a third reservoir in the Houston area.

As the longest serving member in the Texas Senate, I am proud to serve as Dean of the Texas Senate. I take my seniority and role as Dean very seriously. I believe it is important that we fight partisan gridlock and take care of the people's business as we are elected to do. The decisions we make in Austin impact all Texans; no matter where you live, what you do for a living, or which political party you represent.

It has been my privilege to represent Senate District 15 and I am honored to continue to work on your behalf in our community and in Austin.

Sincerely,


JOHN WHITMIRE

PREPARING FOR THE 86TH LEGISLATIVE SESSION

While the regular legislative session lasts for only 140 days every two years, Senator Whitmire and his colleagues serve on a variety of committees that continue to work during the interim to receive input from the public and discuss upcoming issues of importance. Each committee will hold hearings and will present a report to the 86th Legislature including its findings and recommendations. The following is a list of some of the key interim charges being studied by the Texas Senate.



Business and Commerce

- Make recommendations to increase the stability in the health insurance market and enhance value and affordability.
- Examine the competitive nature of the Texas retail electric system.



Criminal Justice

- Study current re-entry programs to ensure individuals released from prison have adequate support to allow for successful re-entry and integration into the community.
- Review the state jail system and make recommendations on reducing recidivism and improving outcomes.
- Study opportunities to increase awareness of human trafficking including how and where to report human trafficking activity.



Education

- Study compensation strategies for classroom teachers to help attract, retain and reward teachers.
- Examine student discipline mandates to reduce classroom discipline issues and provide support for students and teachers.
- Make recommendations on incentives to expand high-performing campuses and programs.



Finance

- Examine funding patterns used to fund the juvenile justice system and adult probation including programs to provide services to youth in their community.
- Review revenue sources for the state's trauma system including efforts to eliminate the Driver Responsibility Program.



Senator Whitmire listens to testimony during an interim hearing of the Senate Finance Committee.



Health and Human Services

- Review the quality of services offered to families and children by the Department of Family and Protective Services.
- Study substance use prevention, intervention, and recovery programs.
- Review efforts to improve quality and efficiency in the Medicaid program.



Higher Education

- Examine policies to help students transfer credits between institutions.
- Consider the role the state should have in overseeing new higher education locations and expansions.
- Review efforts to implement innovative and non-traditional models of education delivery to meet the needs of a diverse student body.



Natural Resources and Economic Development

- Study the permitting and compliance processes for waste disposal and processing.
- Make recommendations to reduce administrative or regulatory barriers hindering economic growth.



State Affairs

- Examine and assess public pension systems in Texas.
- Examine the structure of court fees and ensure court costs are appropriate and justified.



Transportation

- Make recommendations to increase investments in Texas ports.
- Review penalty practices employed by toll road authorities.
- Study state and federal transportation funding to accelerate project delivery.



Hurricane Harvey Response

- Make recommendations on how to move forward with water infrastructure projects to help mitigate floods.
- Study infrastructure security and energy restoration post weather events.
- Examine requirements regarding the notification of homebuyers on their need for flood insurance.
- Assess state and local hurricane response and recovery for schools including the impact on school funding, enrollment, and property valuation.
- Monitor all funds used to address Hurricane Harvey relief and recovery.
- Review options to expedite debris removal.
- Study efforts related to protecting Texans from price-gouging.
- Evaluate how property tax law could better advance disaster recovery while ensuring taxpayers are protected from excessive taxation.

ELECTION DAY
2018

One of the most fundamental rights in a democracy is the right to vote. Offices up for election on November 6, 2018 include United States Senate and House of Representatives, Governor, Lieutenant Governor, Attorney General, all other statewide elected positions, and our Senate District 15 and your State Representative. There are also many local and judicial positions on the ballot.

Register to vote by requesting an application from the Harris County Tax Office by calling 713-274-VOTE (8683) or by stopping by any of the Harris County area tax offices or any public library. Applications and more information can be found at www.hctax.net/Voter/Registration.

Voters can cast their vote prior to election day at several early voting locations. If you wait until election day, you must vote at your precinct voting poll location. Precincts are listed on your voter registration card or you can find early voting locations and precinct polling information by contacting the Harris County Clerk's Office at 713-755-6965 or www.harrisvotes.org.

IMPORTANT 2018
ELECTION DATES

- February 5, 2018
Last Day to Register to Vote in Primary Election
- February 20 - March 2, 2018
Early Voting for Primary Election
- March 6, 2018
Primary Election Day
- October 9, 2018
Last Day to Register to Vote in General Election
- October 22 - November 2, 2018
Early Voting for General Election
- November 6, 2018
General Election Day



Senator Whitmire and Houston Police Chief Art Acevedo discuss criminal justice reforms at the Capitol.

SENATE DISTRICT 15 CONSTITUENT QUESTIONNAIRE

I would appreciate if you would take a few minutes to complete this questionnaire so I may know your thoughts on some key issues. Thank you for your time and input.

- | | Yes | No | Undecided |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Do you support using the State’s “Rainy Day” Fund to aid in Hurricane Harvey recovery and relief? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. Are you in favor of allowing guns on college campuses? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. Should taxpayer dollars be used to provide vouchers for students to attend private or charter schools? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4. In your opinion, what are the three most important issues facing the State of Texas and your family? | | | |

Additional comments:

Name _____

Address _____, Apt. # _____

City _____, Texas, Zip Code _____

Email address: _____

Please mail your completed survey to: Senator John Whitmire, P.O. Box 12068, Austin, Texas 78711; fax to (512) 475-3737; scan and email to john.whitmire@senate.texas.gov; or submit online at www.whitmire.senate.texas.gov

HELPFUL TOLL FREE NUMBERS

Abuse Hotline (children, elderly, disabled)800-252-5400
Children's Health Insurance (CHIP)800-647-6558
Child Support Enforcement800-252-8014
Consumer Protection800-621-0508
Consumer Credit Helpline800-538-1579
Crime Victims Compensation800-983-9933
Crime Stoppers800-252-8477
Emergency Roadside Assistance800-525-5555
Environmental Complaints888-777-3186

Governor's Constituent Communication800-843-5789
Insurance Information and Assistance800-252-3439
Legal Referral800-252-9690
Medicaid Hotline800-252-8263
Runaway Hotline888-580-4357
Suicide Prevention Lifeline800-273-8255
Comptroller's Taxpayer Assistance >800-252-5555
Voter Registration and Elections800-252-8683
Youth Hotline800-210-2278



Senator John Whitmire
Dean of the Texas Senate
P.O. Box 12068 Austin, Texas 78711

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SENATOR JOHN WHITMIRE

SENATE DISTRICT 15

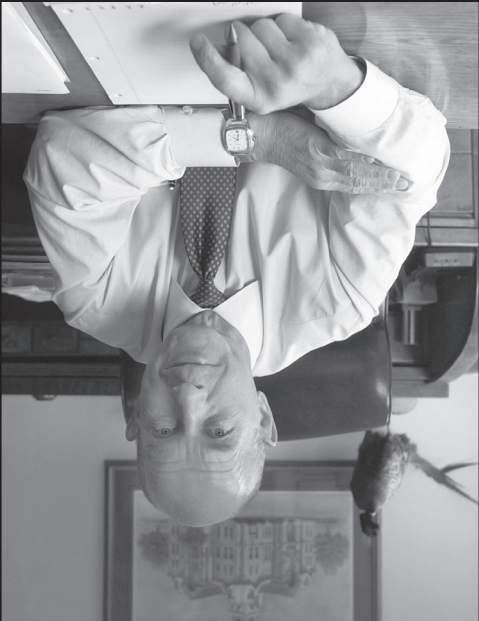
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